




THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

## M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: May 8, 2019

TO: Honorable Council President Georgette Gómez, Council District 9  
Honorable Councilmember Chris Ward, Council District 3

FROM:  Kris McFadden, Director, Transportation & Storm Water Department  
via Johnnie Perkins, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, Infrastructure/Public Works

SUBJECT: Pilot Program for Bus-Only Lane on El Cajon Boulevard

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On January 24, 2019 Council President Gómez and Council Member Ward requested that Transportation Engineering Operations (TEO) work with MTS to *"study the feasibility of a bus-only lane, in each direction, maximizing signal prioritization operations, and prepare cost estimates and work plans for restriping and additional signage"* (Attachment 1).

TEO staff, working with our partners at MTS, have prepared the following preliminary response and evaluation for your consideration.

### Background and current MTS Operations

Mid-City Rapid is a limited stop transit service between San Diego State University and Downtown San Diego along College Avenue, El Cajon and Park boulevards. The service launched as Rapid 215 on October 12, 2014. The route is linear, with multiple transfer and connection opportunities linking major employment and educational nodes. Route 1 serves La Mesa to Fashion Valley along El Cajon Boulevard.

The Rapid 215 is the fifth-most traveled bus service MTS operates. However, if averaged together Rapid 215 and Route 1, El Cajon Boulevard becomes the second-busiest corridor by ridership, behind only Routes 7 and 10 along University Avenue (which will be getting partial dedicated bus lanes as part of the University Avenue Mobility Plan). El Cajon Boulevard bus routes carried 10,484 passengers per average weekday.

### Federal and State Regulations

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that the use of red colored pavement for public transit systems is currently experimental. Use of such treatment may be used only with FHWA granting experimentation approval under the provisions of Section 1A.10 of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD). Agencies that desire to

experiment with colored pavement should only do so when an engineering study can determine that increased travel speeds will be expected by the public bus vehicle, reduced overall service time through the corridor will be expected by the public bus vehicle, and the implementation of the colored pavement to a converted general purpose traveled way will not adversely affect the traffic flow in the remaining general-purpose lanes. The San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency conducted a "Red Transit Lanes" trial under California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC) Experiment 12-18 and FHWA Experiment 9(03)-18 (E). MTS is currently working with Caltrans District 11 and the CA Traffic Control Devices Committee to experiment with red bus only markings on the transit only lanes on I-15 in Mid-City.

#### Potential Projects and Cost Estimates

Bus-Only lanes have been implemented on City streets. There are several completed examples downtown with single solid white line striping, BUS ONLY stencils (4<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Broadway to E Street, 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Broadway to A Street) and queue jump transit only signals (northbound First Street at Ash Street, eastbound Broadway at Third Avenue, southbound Fourth Avenue at F Street).

As requested, TEO has prepared three potential projects for evaluation and consideration (Attachment 2):

##### *Full BUS ONLY Red Lane*

This project would deliver the most substantial improvement to bus service by providing a dedicated transit only lane along the corridor from Park Boulevard to Fairmount Ave. However, this option would require a new CEQA analysis, as it could not rely on the previous IS/MND, which specifically did not analyze a continuous transit lane. Preliminary cost estimates put the full red lane treatment from Park Boulevard to Fairmount Avenue with additional queue jump signals at \$4.5 million. This option could remain a possible Phase II project, while funding is identified, new CEQA is prepared, and preliminary engineering for traffic signal modifications and other considerations occur.

##### *Queue Bypass Lanes*

This option would provide intermittent marked lanes for transit buses to advance to the front of select intersections experiencing the most congestion (and thus delay). The 2008 IS/MND did anticipate queue bypass lanes with red thermoplastic and BUS ONLY stencils at select intersections. Working closely with MTS Operations three intersections (30<sup>th</sup> ST, I-805 ramps, and Fairmount Ave) and segments have been identified for such lanes and could be implemented with signage, striping and no traffic signal modifications. A preliminary cost estimate for three queue bypass lanes with red thermoplastic is \$50,000. A current CEQA memo of findings and exemptions can be prepared to cover this work if selected. However, as red paint in travel lanes is currently not approved this option would require an experimentation request and additional time to process through FHWA and CTCDC.

##### *BUS ONLY Lane Line Pilot Project*

This option proposes, as a pilot project, to install a solid 8" white line to identify the #3 lane as BUS ONLY from Park Boulevard to Fairmount Avenue. As a temporary pilot project, MTS could evaluate if this temporary treatment provides operational benefits, such as travel time reliability, on the corridor. This option, by not using red paint, is immediately MUTCD

compliant and feasible, but may suffer from low driver compliance, and would require additional enforcement during the pilot period. A preliminary cost estimates for this option is \$97,000.

#### Municipal Code

San Diego Municipal Code §22.3105 states that "City forces shall not be used on a public works project if the cost of using City forces exceeds \$100,000 unless the City Council has approved use of City forces on the project. Therefore, direction to implement the full bus only red lane option would need Council approval to develop a new project and allocate resources. However, the queue bypass lanes at select locations or bus only lane lines could be implemented under the municipal code threshold.

#### Summary and Recommendation

TEO finds that operational modifications are possible to provide enhancements to bus service on El Cajon Boulevard within the existing right-of-way and with treatments intended to improve travel time reliability, visibility, and efficiency of transit operations. TEO and MTS staff are available for further discussion with the Council Offices based upon review of this feasibility memorandum.

Sincerely,



Kris McFadden

Director, Transportation & Storm Water Department

- Attachments: 1. Memorandum dated January 24, 2019 from Council President Gómez  
and Councilmember Chris Ward  
2. Bus Lane Concepts

cc: Aimee Faucett, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor  
Kris Michell, Chief Operating Officer  
Andrea Tevlin, Independent Budget Analyst  
Stacey LoMedico, Assistant Chief Operating Officer  
Ronald H. Villa, Assistant Chief Operating Officer  
Jessica Lawrence, Director of Council Affairs, Office of the Mayor  
John Ly, Director of Community Engagement, Office of the Mayor  
Lee Friedman, Infrastructure Policy Manager, Office of the Mayor  
Adrian Granda, Public Policy Manager, Office of the Mayor  
Eric Young, Community Representative, Office of the Mayor  
Sharon Cooney, Chief of Staff, Metropolitan Transit System  
James Nagelvoort, Director and City Engineer, Public Works Department  
Gene Matter, Assistant Director, Transportation & Storm Water Department  
Duncan Hughes, Deputy Director, Transportation & Storm Water Department  
Kristy Reeser, Deputy Director, Transportation & Storm Water Department  
Everett Hauser, Program Manager, Transportation & Storm Water Department






**CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
COUNCIL PRESIDENT GEORGETTE GÓMEZ  
COUNCILMEMBER CHRISTOPHER WARD**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

DATE: January 24, 2019

TO: Mayor Kevin Faulconer 

FROM: Council President Georgette Gómez and Councilmember Chris Ward

SUBJECT: Pilot Program for Bus-Only Lane on El Cajon Boulevard

Improving our transit routes and increasing ridership is essential to meet our Climate Action Plan goals. In 2009, the San Diego region's first urban Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) began operating along El Cajon Boulevard, connecting Downtown to San Diego State University (SDSU). Originally designed to operate in dedicated bus lanes with signal prioritization, those plans did not move forward, leaving buses to run alongside vehicular traffic with limited signal prioritization.

The corridor is home to *Rapid 215* and Route 1, which together carry 10,000 people per day. Bus-only lanes are a key component of a high-quality BRT network, improving bus travel speeds and reliability by reducing delay caused by other traffic. Our offices support creating a pilot program for bus-only lanes on El Cajon Boulevard from Park Boulevard to Fairmount Avenue, spanning approximately 2.7 miles. This is a first step in improving the efficiency of the BRT routes and eventually extending the bus-only lanes to SDSU.

The Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) and El Cajon Boulevard Business Improvement Association strongly support this effort. The aim is to create a pilot program to study ridership, reliability, and trip speed data along this corridor. MTS has agreed to conduct a study to evaluate the efficacy of this pilot program and is looking for collaboration from the City on design and funding.

Our offices request that Transportation Engineering Operations staff work with MTS to study the feasibility of a bus-only lane in each direction, maximize signal prioritization operations, and prepare cost estimates and work plans for restriping and additional signage for this pilot program.

We look forward to collaborating with your office in making this pilot program a success.

CC: Jessica Lawrence, Director of Council Affairs, Office of the Mayor  
Lee Friedman, Infrastructure Policy Manager, Office of the Mayor  
Adrian Granda, Public Policy Manager, Office of the Mayor  
Sharon Cooney, Chief of Staff, Metropolitan Transit System  
Robyn Wapner, Senior Legislative Analyst, San Diego Association of Governments

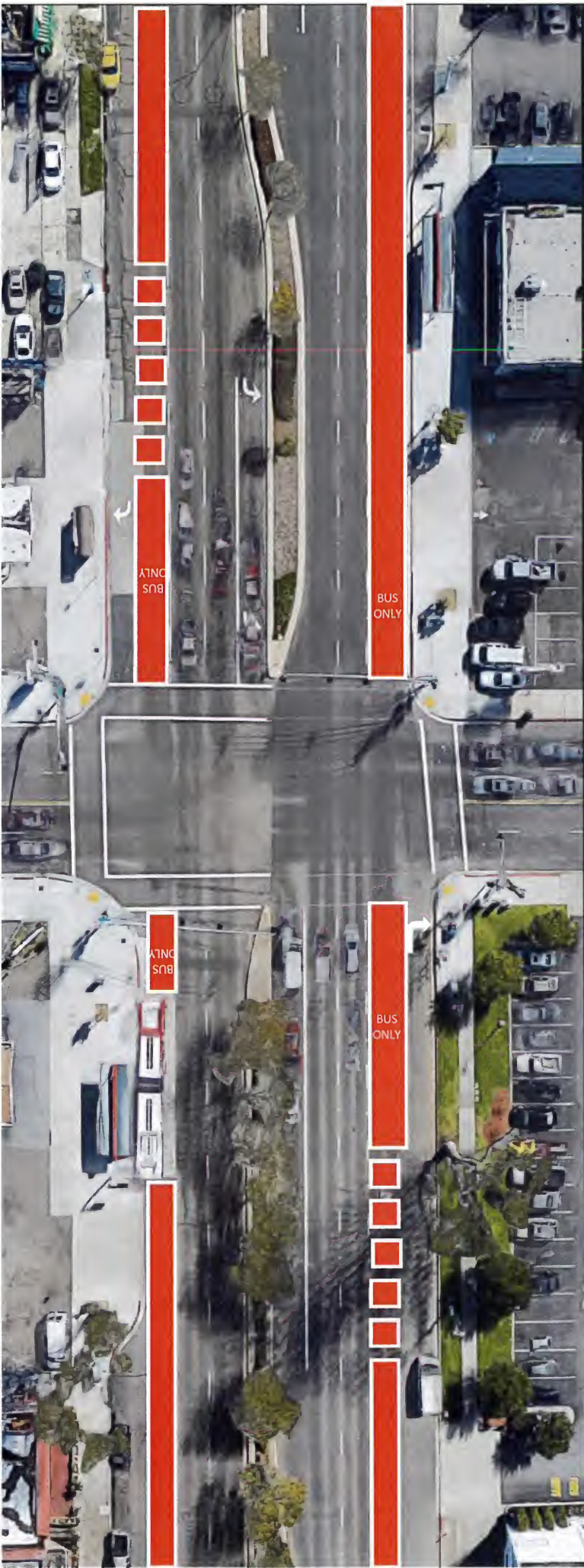






# Existing Rapid Station | El Cajon Blvd @ Texas St





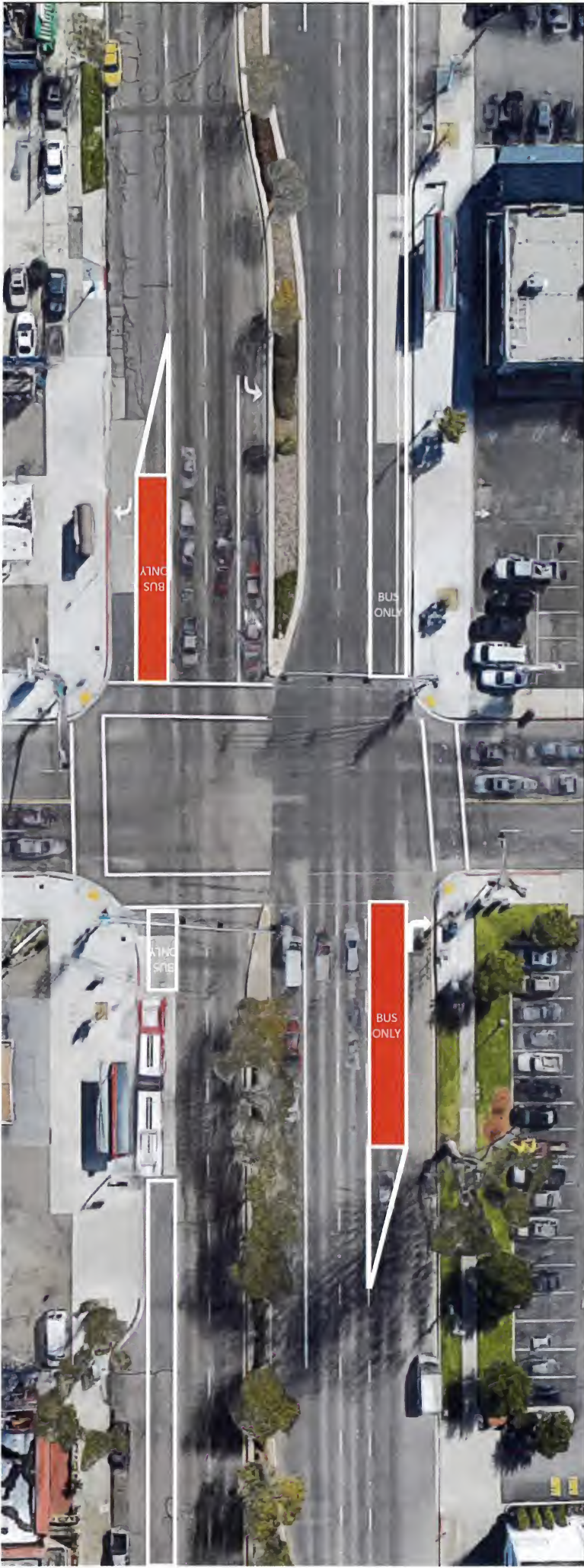
# Full Red Lane Treatment | Cost: \$\$\$\$





[https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/me\\_2015.pdf](https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/me_2015.pdf)



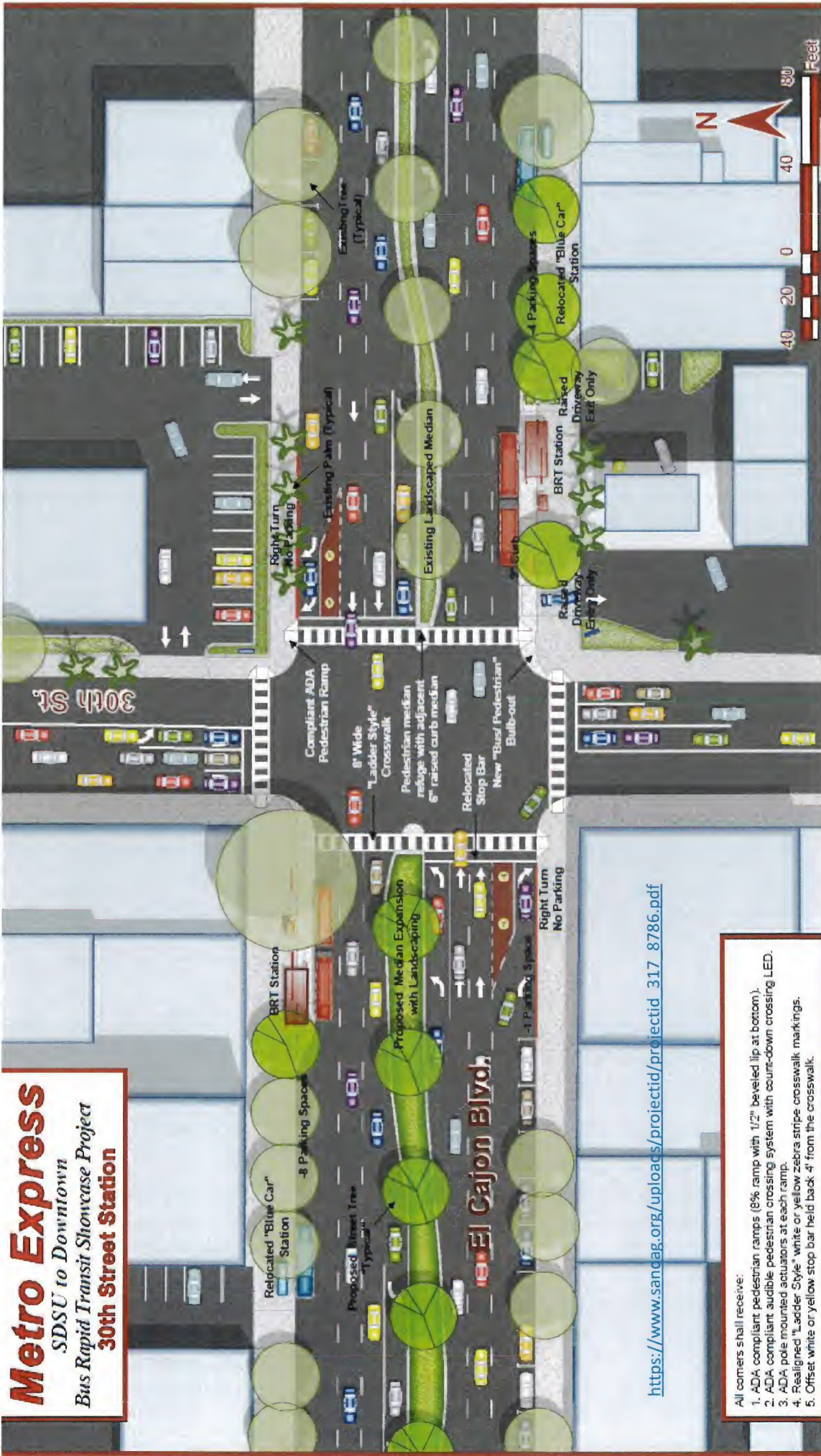


# Partial Red Lane Treatment | Cost: \$\$



# Metro Express

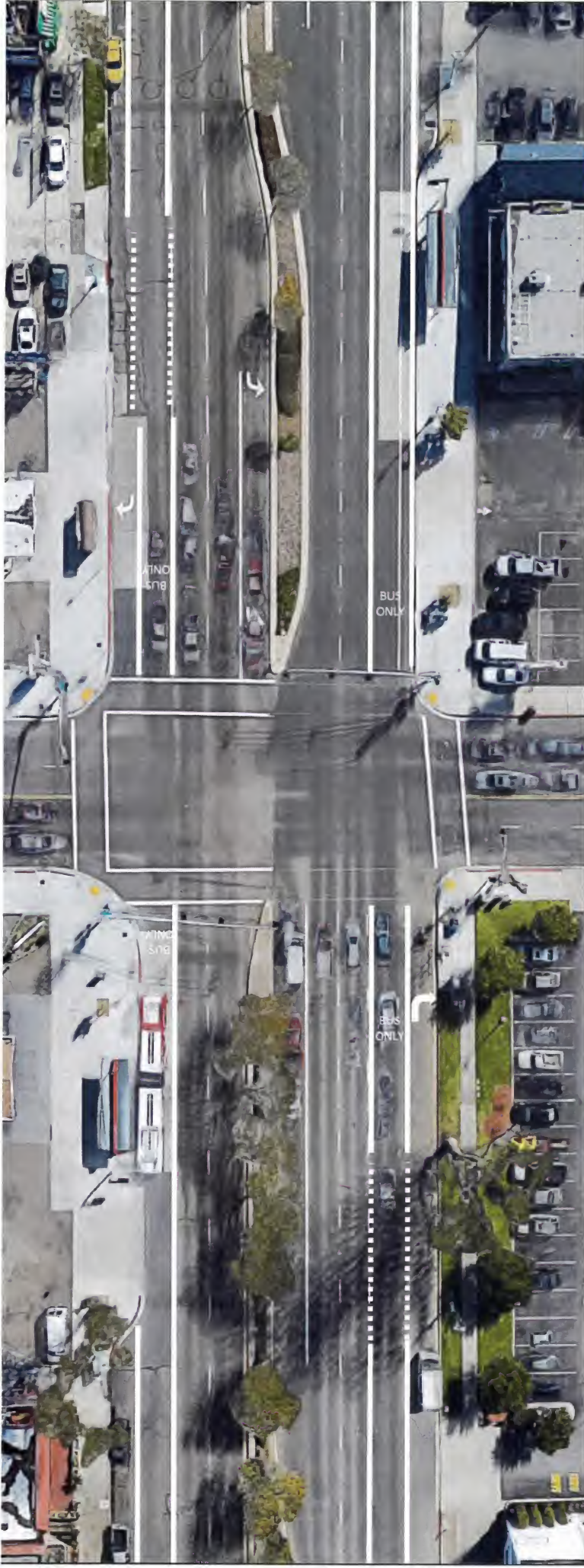
SDSU to Downtown  
Bus Rapid Transit Showcase Project  
30th Street Station



<https://www.sandag.org/uploads/projectid/projectid 317 8786.pdf>

- All corners shall receive:
1. ADA compliant pedestrian ramps (8% ramp with 1/2" beveled lip at bottom).
  2. ADA compliant audible pedestrian crossing system with count-down crossing LED.
  3. ADA pole mounted actuators at each ramp.
  4. Realigned "Ladder Style" white or yellow zebra stripe crosswalk markings.
  5. Offset white or yellow stop bar held back 4' from the crosswalk.





# Bus Only Lane Treatment | Cost: \$\$\$



